

female was found upon excavating the burrow, and taken alive. Some pairs of the birds were very unsuspicious, and others again exceedingly wild and systematically shy. In many cases the birds had two burrows, always close together, but one would be quite short, and apparently used but little, probably by the male bird as a roosting place, for I believe these birds to be strictly diurnal, doing most of their hunting, however, in the early morning and evening.

The series of birds of this species obtained at this point, during the week spent there, numbers fifty-three, forty-eight adults and five young birds in the down.

Conurus carolinensis.—This can only be considered a nomadic visitor in this part of Florida. They appear, generally in the fall on the upper waters of the river, in small parties, feeding on the cypress mast. But, from the reliable information furnished by Capt. Menge and others, it appears that they are still common residents, and that they breed in the cypress swamps on the northeast side of Lake Okeechobee.

Campephilus principalis.—This species, though not common, is not very rare in this region. I obtained six individuals and saw and heard about as many more. They breed here early in February.

Ceophlœus pileatus.—During early April I found two nests of this species, each containing four fresh eggs. The first, on April 9, was in a dead cabbage palmetto, forty-five feet from the ground, and these eggs were unfortunately broken in being taken from the nest. The second set was taken on April 12, from a nest in a dead pine tree, and the entrance to this nest was but fifteen feet from the ground.

Antrostomus vociferus.—Winters regularly in the vicinity of Fort Myers. During December and January I took two and saw and heard others.

Myiarchus crinitus.—Winters regularly in the vicinity of Fort Myers and Punta Rassa. Several specimens were secured during December, January, and February.

PITTA GRANATINA TEMMINCK ET AUCTORES.

BY D. G. ELLIOT.

MY ATTENTION has lately been called again to the question of the specific difference of the Pittas with black foreheads and crimson napes from Borneo, on the one hand, and from Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula, etc., on the other. I have always con-

tended that the two forms were not specifically distinct, while, per contra, a considerable number of very competent ornithologists have retained them in their writings as two species. The main difference, and the one upon which the separation of the two forms must chiefly depend, is the width of the black frontal band, this in the Bornean bird extending across the top of the head from a line drawn behind the eyes, in the Sumatran and Malayan form only to a line drawn before the eyes, the black not reaching the orbit. Other slight differences in the color of the plumage also exist, but these it is not necessary to discuss at present. The first point that requires to be considered is the nomenclature. Temminck states (Plan. Col., text to pl. 506) that two specimens were brought to Leyden from Borneo by M. Diard, and Schlegel in the *Musèum des Pays-Bas*, *Pitta*, 1863, p. 5, enumerates these as adult females from Pontianak, Borneo. There would seem therefore to be no doubt that Temminck had two Bornean specimens before him. But in his 'Planches Coloriées' he neither figures nor describes the bird that all authors have considered as from Borneo, and have called *Pitta granatina*, but on the contrary his plate represents, and his text describes, the Sumatran and Malaccan bird with the narrow black frontal band not extending back of a line drawn in front of the eyes, in fact, as represented in his figure, not reaching as far as the eye. His description of this part is as follows: "*du noir profond couvre le front, entoure le bec et l'orbite des yeux, et forme au-dessus de cet organe, un large sourcil.*" This is not a character of the Bornean bird, for it has no superciliary stripe, the whole top of the head between the eyes being black, while the Sumatran and Malayan form does possess a black line above the eye.

Now it might naturally at first be supposed from this that both styles of frontal bands occur in Bornean examples of this *Pitta*, and that Temminck had received some with the narrow black line. But we must decline to accept this view of the case, because Schlegel, who was very quick to detect such differences in examples of nearly related specific forms, figures in his work, 'De Vogels van Nederlandsch Indië' (*Pitta*, pl. 5, fig. 3), the Bornean bird with the front half of the head black, and neither in that work nor in the '*Musèum des Pays-Bas*,' 1863 and 1874, *Pitta*, does he make any reference to the Sumatran and Malayan

birds, all his specimens having come from Borneo. We must therefore conclude that the bird Temminck received was of the usual style of this *Pitta* from that island. Now where did the bird figured and described in the 'Planches Coloriées' come from?

Huet, the artist who drew plate 506, was a Frenchman, and, I believe, was employed in the Jardin des Plantes, as his son is today, and lived in Paris. It may be that he took as the original of his painting a specimen in the Paris Museum (as was done in some instances by Prêtre, another of Temminck's draughtsmen), no one at the time supposing there were two styles, and that this one happened to be the bird with the narrow frontal band; and that Temminck, also not perceiving any difference, wrote his description in accordance with his plate. That he did not discover any difference need not surprise any one; as for over sixty years, during which time this plate has been published, no ornithologist seems to have noticed the discrepancy that has existed between this figure and the Bornean bird, although the species has been the subject at various times of considerable discussion.

Nine years after this plate was published, Eyton, in the Proceedings of the Zoölogical Society, 1839, p. 104, described the bird from 'Malaya' (!) as *Pitta coccinea*. His description is as follows: "PITTA COCCINEA. P. occipite, nuchâ, corporeque subtus coccineis; alis, dorso, caudâ, strigâque utrinque nuchæ, cyaneis; gutture ferrugineis; lateribus capitis, pedibus, rostroque atris. Long. corp. 8 unc.; rostrum, $\frac{3}{4}$ unc.; tarsi, $1\frac{1}{2}$ unc." It will be noticed that there is no reference whatever to the black frontal band, and his description will answer as well for the Bornean as for the Malaccan bird. Beyond Malaya, he gives no locality, but we may presume he had the bird with the narrow black front. I do not know what became of his type. The consequence of all this is, that the Sumatra and Malayan bird having been described and figured by Temminck as *Pitta granatina*, erroneously given as from Borneo, must bear that name, of which *Pitta coccinea* Eyton, is a synonym, and the Bornean bird is without a name, as no other appellation has ever been given to it. It makes no difference what name Temminck may have attached to the specimens from Borneo in the Leyden Museum, for, as he never described nor figured those birds, his appellation would be simply a manuscript one, and therefore a *nomen nudum*. Gould, in his 'Birds of Asia,' Vol. V, pls. 67 and 68,

figures both forms, under the names they usually go by, and says there is no variation in the width of the frontal bands between the narrow and the wide. I cannot think he could have made a careful examination of a series of specimens belonging to the former, as I have found a very considerable variation among specimens, although I have not yet seen any Malaccan or Sumatran specimens in which the black front passed behind the fore part of the eye, nor any Bornean with a band as narrow as in those specimens from other localities. The post-ocular stripe, and the apical portions of the wing-coverts are of a more silvery and lighter blue, and the general plumage of the adults is darker in the Bornean birds than in the Sumatran or Malaccan, and if they are to be separated the former could only be assigned to a subspecific rank, and in view of its being without a name, as I have shown, may be called *Pitta granatina borneënsis*.

Occiput and nape crimson.

Frontal black band not extending to the eye.....*P. granatina*.

Frontal black band extending behind the eye.....*P. g. borneënsis*.

HABITS OF THE AMERICAN HERRING GULL (*LARUS ARGENTATUS SMITHSONIANUS*) IN NEW ENGLAND.

BY GEORGE H. MACKAY.

THIS Gull is the most abundant of those larger Gulls which pass the late autumn, winter and spring months on the New England coast as well as farther south. Naturally exceedingly wary, they will nevertheless frequent the very heart of civilization if unmolested, and may be seen any day during the winter in the waters surrounding New York City, as also in those around Boston, flying and sailing high up over both cities as they pass from the water on one side to that on the other. Long continued undisturbed occupation of these haunts has rendered them exceedingly gentle and tame. In order to become better acquainted with them under more natural surroundings it will be necessary to remain at the seashore at some place where they can be ob-